

Soviets to Turn Up Heat on Lithuania

Georgians Rally for Independence

By Michael Dobbs
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, April 9—The Kremlin announced tonight it will step up its pressure campaign against Lithuania and accused the Lithuanian leaders of blocking a solution to the month-long secessionist crisis, while huge crowds gathered in the southern republic of Georgia to demand the restoration of Georgian independence.

About 100,000 Georgians, holding candles and waving independent Georgian flags, held an all-night vigil in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, to mourn the killings of 20 people by Soviet troops in an anti-government demonstration a year ago. About 70,000 people nearly filled the republic's main stadium this evening for a similar rally.

The statement on Lithuania, which was issued after a meeting of the presidential council chaired by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, did not specify precisely what action Moscow plans to take to restore its authority in the rebel republic. But its tone was uncompromising and suggested the beginning of a new stage in the war of wills between Moscow and Vilnius.

"The present Lithuanian leadership is blocking any exit from the crisis with its anti-constitutional actions and the escalation of illegal measures. It is aggravating the situation in the republic for which it bears full responsibility," the four-paragraph statement said, as reported by the official Soviet news agency Tass.

A range of weapons are open to the Kremlin in escalating the pressure on Lithuania, including the declaration of direct presidential rule. Amendments to the Soviet constitution adopted last month give Gorbachev the power to suspend the democratically elected

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